Meeting of Crisis Management Group

3029. PROF. M. SANKARALINGAM: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have the convened the first meeting of the high-power Crisis Management Group taking into account the war in Iraq;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) if not, the reasons therefor;

(d) whether Government have evaluated the war scenario and its outcome; and

(e) if so, the steps taken by Government to safeguard the future oil requiements?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI VINOD KHANNA): (a) to (d) The first meeting of the Iraq: Crisis Management Committee was held in the Ministry of External Affairs on March 17,2003. The Committee has been meeting regularly to reivew the impact of the war in Iraq on India and the Indian community in the Gulf region.

(e) There has been no disruption in supplies of oil on account of the on-going war. The measures taken by the Government to safeguard the future oil requirements include diversification of crude oil imports from different countries, increasing domestic production and acquiring equity oil abroad.

All Party meeting to discuss US action against Iraq

3030. SHRI MANOJ BHATTACHARYA: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(b) whether an all party meeting was convened on the 22nd march, 2003 in New Delhi to take a unified stand with regard to the unilateral action by U.S.A. in declaring a war against Iraq;

(c) if so, whether any consensus could be arrived at in the matter and if so, the details thereof;

(d) if not, the reasons therefor; and

(e) what were the major areas of difference between Government and the Opposition parties on this issue?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI VINOD KHANNA): (a) to (d)The objective of the all party meeting convened on 22nd March, 2003 was to maintain the tradition of consultations with political parties on important international issues. The opportunity was utilized to elicit the views of different political parties and to inform them of Government's policy relating to the evolving situation in Iraq.

Release of ISI agents by America

† 3031. PROF. ALKA BALRAM KSHTRIYA: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(b) whehter Government are aware that America has allowed a number of ISI agent who were apprehended by America, during the course of war in the name of terrorism in Afghanistan to go to Pakistan by releasing them and thousands of Al-Qaida terrorists have also accompanied them who later scattered in whole Pakistan and Jammu and Kashmir; and

(c) if so, the details of the action Government have taken in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI DIGVIJAY SINGH): (a) Government has seen reports and has made its own assessment in this regard.

(b) Government has conveyed to the international community, including the United States, its strong concerns about the relocation of Al-Qaida terrorists, Taliban functionaries and their Pakistani supporters from Afghanistan to Pakistan, which can undermine the war against terrorism, including the cross-border terrorism in Jammu and Kashmir.

† Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.